Bulbinella rossii

COMMON NAMES
Ross's lily

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, PD, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS
Yellow


Sub Antarctic Islands. Photographer: Chris Rance, Licence: CC BY-NC.


Campbell Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, stout, perennial lily up to 1 m tall and 40 mm diameter at the base. **Leaves** fleshy, 0.6–1m x 15–60 mm wide, dark green, obtuse to subacute, apices recurved, nerves faint to prominent, easily felt when fresh. **Peduncle** up to 10 mm diameter, usually < leaf length. **Inflorescence** a cylindric raceme up to 150 × 600 mm; bracts and pedicels of almost equal length in female flowers and conspicuous in bud; in males < pedicels and inconspicuous in bud; pedicels 10–20 mm long, swollen just below flower. **Flowers** numerous, densely crowded, 10–14 mm diameter, golden yellow to sulphur yellow, often faintly tinged with orange; tepals oblong-ovate, spreading in males in females erect and remaining so, usually hardening as fruit ripens. **Stamens** < tepals; anthers in males conspicuously filled with pollen, in females rudimentary. **Ovary** 2 mm long, broad right to base. **Capsule** 10 mm long, broadly ovoid, gynophore absent. **Seeds** 4-6 mm long, dark brown to black, narrowly winged.

SIMILAR TAXA
None. This is the only species of *Bulbinella* Kunth present on the subantarctic islands. *Bulbinella rossii* is perhaps closest to *B. gibbsii* Cockayne, from which it differs by its greater stature, leaves up to 60 mm wide, cylindric rather than conical racemes held on a stout rather than slender axis which is obscured by the densely crowded flowers and fruits rather than more or less visible. *Bulbinella rossii* has a distinctly capitate rather than scarcely capitate stigma.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT
Widespread and common from sea level to the tops of island ranges. Flourishes in disturbed sites, and so common near old habitations and because it is not especially palatable, where browsing animals congregate. prefers open herbfield and tussock grassland, where it may form dense colonies.

THREATS
No apparent threats. Listed because it occupies a small geographic area.

GENUS
Bulbinella

FAMILY
Asphodelaceae

AUTHORITY
Bulbinella rossii (Hook.f.) Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
Chrysobactron rossii Hook.f.; Anthericum rossii (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–January

FRUITING
December–March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Winged seeds are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. It has been cultivated with limited success in the more southerly parts of New Zealand.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
bulbinella: Little bulb
rossii: Named for William Ross, a botanical collector; or Capt. James Ross, leader of an arctic expedition; or others named Ross, depending on genus

NVS CODE
BULROS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 14

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.
Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified by Peter de Lange from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/bulbinella-rossii/

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